

Israel ready to free Hamas founder

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel is ready to free the imprisoned founder of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, if provided he renounces "terrorism." Foreign Minister Shimon Peres told Israeli television Friday. "If Sheikh Yassin calls on his people to release and even dialogue with him," Mr. Peres said. Sheikh Yassin, 59, was jailed for life in October 1991 for murder, incitement to violence and possession of weapons. He is paralysed in both legs, and Sheikh Yassin founded Hamas in 1988, after the intifada erupted in the occupied territories. Hamas, a rival to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in the occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank, is violently opposed to the Middle East peace process and the Israeli-PLO autonomy deal struck in Washington in September. Last week Hamas and the mainstream Fatah faction of the PLO signed an agreement to halt inter-Palestinian clashes in the run-up to self-rule.

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Condolences pour in as Jordan remains in mourning over passing of Queen Zein

President Assad visits Amman to condole King Hussein

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein and members of the Royal Family on Friday continued to receive condolences from Jordanians and foreign leaders over the passing of Her Majesty Queen Zein Al Sharaf, the Queen Mother.

The Queen Mother, who passed away on Tuesday at the age of 85, was laid to rest at the Royal Cemetery on Wednesday.

Syrian President Hafez Al Assad visited Amman on Thursday to personally offer his condolences to the King, who visited him in Syria to condole him over the death of his son, Basil, 31, in a car crash in January.

President Assad, paying his first visit to Jordan in four years, was accompanied by his Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharara and Information Minister Mohammad Salama.

The Jordan News Agency

cy, Petra, said the King and President Assad also exchanged views on bilateral relations and stressed the need to further enhance Syrian-Jordanian relations.

The meeting between the King and President Assad was attended by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and the King's advisors.

King Hussein voiced appreciation to President Assad for personally coming to Jordan to offer his condolences and implored Almighty God to protect him and the Syrian people.

Receiving and seeing off President Assad were the King, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Their Royal Highnesses Prince Abdullah, Prince Faisal, Prince Hashem, Prince Hamzeh, Prince Talal Ben Mohammad and Prince Rashed Ben Al Hasan.

Dr. Majali, Sharif Zeid, the King's advisors,

Cabinet members and other senior officials.

Also on Thursday, the King received two envoys from Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat, who, earlier reports had said, was expected to visit Amman to pay condolences to the King.

Mr. Arafat's envoys who were received by the King were Abbas Zaki, a prominent member of the Fatah Central Committee, and Al Tayeb Abdurrahim, the Palestinian ambassador to Jordan.

On Friday, the King received a telephone call from Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak who offered his own condolences and those of the government and people of Egypt, Petra said.

The Royal Court meanwhile continued to receive cables of condolences from present and former heads of state and prime minis-

Al Fatiha recited

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein, accompanied by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, members of the Royal Family, Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and Royal Court Imam Ahmad Hejazi on Friday visited the tomb of the late Queen Zein Al Sharaf where they read Al Fatiha (the first sura in the Holy Koran) for her soul.

ters, ministers, heads of national, Arab and international organisations, secretaries general of political parties, parliamentarians, ambassadors and representatives of the Jordanian community in America, Australia, Canada, Europe and the Arab World.

The King also received cables of condolences from

King Carl Gustav of Sweden, Romanian President Ion Iliescu, Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan, the president of the Comoros Federal Council, U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali, former Austrian President Kurt Waldheim, former King of Malaysia Sultan Azlan Shah, Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou, Speaker of the Egyptian Peoples Assembly Ahmed Fathi Sorour, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa, Sheikh Rashid Ben Abdullah Ben Mohammad Al Khalifah and former Egyptian Prime Minister Abdul Aziz Hizaji.

The King also received cables of condolences from Secretary General of the Islamic Council for International Dawah and Relief Kamel Al Sharif, Deputy Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural



His Majesty King Hussein on Thursday holds meeting attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan (Petra photo)

the Lebanese Liberal party, wife of the Bahraini Crown Prince Sabika Bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Nasib Lahoud and Adnan Tarabulsi, members of the Lebanese Lower House, Sheikh Nabay Ben Mubarak Al Nahayan, Bishop Boulos Al Souqi of the Orthodox Syrian Church in Damascus, Hassan Kureis, the secretary general of the Arab Doctors Union, and the president of the Arab Academy for Certified Accountants. Cables were also sent by members of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament, presidents of Jordanian universities, mayors and village council heads, secretaries-general of political parties in Jordan, tribal leaders, refugee camp representatives, doctors, engineers, advocates, banks and companies' directors and presidents of both the Jordanian press and writers associations.

The Royal Court announced that a condolence register will remain open from Saturday at the Raghadan and Basman palaces from 12-2 p.m.

Israel and PLO sign economy agreement

PARIS (Agencies) — Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) signed a landmark economic accord here Friday and called for financial aid from the international community to help build Palestinian self-rule.

The accord links relations

between Israel and the future autonomous areas on customs tariffs, monetary policy, labour, taxation, agriculture, fuel prices, manufacturing, insurance and tourism (see summary on page 10).

"Today we witness another cornerstone to the edifice of peace," Mr. Shohat said in a speech, ahead of the signing due to take place next Wednesday in Cairo of an overall agreement on the start of self-rule in Gaza and Jericho.

"I want to emphasise and assure the Palestinians that I consider the success of their efforts to build their economy as essential to the success of the whole peace process."

Mr. Qureia called for "international donors and the World Bank to put an end to their reticence to contribute to the running expenses of the Palestinian administration."

"Liberal economic policies would be adopted in the territories, he pledged, inviting

Christopher given Israeli plan for Syria

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin presented U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher with a "global" plan for peace with Syria which will be passed on to Damascus on Saturday.

"We have put forward a global approach which includes, the type of peace, the principle of a withdrawal, the stages and some requests to the United States," Mr. Rabin said after two sessions of talks while showing no sign of preparing for peace.

Both men refused to reveal details of the plan for the Golan Heights, but officials say Israel wants Washington to guarantee security arrangements in a withdrawal phased over 10 years.

"We have presented our positions in principle to the secretary, all our conditions for reaching peace with Syria," added Mr. Rabin, calling for direct negotiations.

"My visit here comes at a time of great hope for peace," Mr. Christopher told reporters.

"We now need to make progress on the Syrian track." He is due to return to Israel and brief Mr. Rabin on Syria's reaction on Sunday.

Mr. Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres were "absolutely serious about this matter and have urged me to attend to it with the utmost seriousness and determination," Mr. Christopher said.

"Tomorrow, I will travel to Damascus, I expect the conversations there to be as serious and substantive as the conversations here."

Mr. Christopher echoed Mr.

Rabin's call for peace between Israel and all its neighbours. "Our goal is a comprehensive peace."

Mr. Peres said: "We are looking how to open the road for meaningful negotiations with the Syrians. We are sincerely interested in making peace with Syria."

Israel Radio reported that Mr. Rabin complained to the secretary that Syria was "dissatisfied" in demanding back all the Golan Heights while showing no sign of preparing for peace.

"Syria is demanding everything but not even offering any confidence-building measures in return."

"It's dishonest" the prime minister reportedly said. He also questioned how Israelis could believe President Assad wanted peace when he refuses a face-to-face meeting.

The Israeli proposals include an offer to withdraw from the Golan Heights in phases and plans for security arrangements to guard against use of the strategic enclave for attacks on Israel.

But Israel is not prepared to spell out how much it might yield of the land it seized from Syria in the 1967 war, Israeli government sources said. The Golan, turned into an airfield buffer on the border, was "annexed" in 1981.

Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad is demanding recovery of all the territory. Mr. Rabin last week gave him cause for optimism by saying he would not let the 13,000 Jewish settlers on the Golan stand in the way.

The southern officials,

Jordan to ease restrictions on W. Bank, Gaza residents

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government announced Friday it will be easing entry and residency restrictions on Palestinians from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Interior Minister Salameh Hammad said "new and relaxed" measures would be enforced starting Sunday because current rules for the two million Palestinians living in the Israeli occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip were no longer feasible.

"The earlier measures were aimed at consolidating Palestinian steadfastness in the occupied territories and blocking Israeli plans of pushing out

Palestinians from their homeland," Mr. Hammad said in comments during a visit to the King Hussein Bridge.

The ministry has decided to review all measures related to the entry of Gaza and West Bank citizens to make it easier for them," Mr. Hammad told the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

"But now, since there will be a self-rule agreement between Israel and the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) followed by the start of Palestinian autonomy which we hope will encourage Palestinians to stay in the occupied territories,

(Continued on page 5)

Yemen crisis flares into clashes

SANA'A (Agencies) — Fighting between rival army units has spread to South Yemen, southern officials said, and tension also rose in the north with accusations that southern troops spread out from the southern capital.

In Sana'a, the northern-run Defense Ministry said Friday that southern troops at a base in Damar, 200 kilometres south of the northern capital, had spread out from the camp.

It said in a statement that the deployment of the southern Basileeb Brigade came "at the orders of the separatist command in the (southern) Yemen Socialist Party to expand the military situation."

Western diplomats also warned that Damar could become a major flashpoint because it is on the main road that links Sana'a with Aden.

A military commission that

includes officers from other Arab states as well as Western military attaches visited Damar in an effort to persuade commanders to order the troops back to barracks.

There have been no new reports of fighting in Amran. Political sources in Sana'a about 400 soldiers have been killed or wounded in the fighting 50 kilometres from the capital Sana'a.

The two-day battle involved around 200 tanks from both sides and was the worst clash since North and South Yemen merged four years ago, the sources in Sana'a said.

"I believe about 400 people have been killed or wounded," one political source said, a figure agreed by others.

The sources said the situation at the battlefield around

(Continued on page 5)

Self-rule agreement set for Cairo signing on May 4

CAIRO (Agencies) — A historic accord to launch Palestinian self-rule on territories occupied by Israel is due to be signed Wednesday if a few remaining sticky disputes can be settled.

"It's the end of a long voyage and the beginning of a new chapter in relations between the Palestinian people and ourselves," said Israel's foreign minister, Shimon Peres.

The date was set by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who played a pivotal role in the breakthrough, even as Secretary of State Warren Christopher abandoned a passive U.S. stance to help Mr. Peres and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat narrow their differences.

Mr. Christopher said he would remain in the region "to assist in any way I can." He flew to Tel Aviv for a meeting Friday with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Their agenda includes the stalled peace talks Israel had been holding with three Arab countries, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon (see separate story). Mr. Rabin will go to Cairo to

see Mr. Arafat Tuesday night. That is the eve of what Mr. Mubarak said both sides had approved for signing the accord to implement the Palestinian self-rule declaration that was signed at the White House last September.

PLO chief negotiator Nabil Shaath said the final agreement to launch self-rule will be drafted when the two sides begin their last round of autonomy talks in Cairo on Sunday.

Mr. Shaath said drawing up the agreement required "great care."

The Palestinians formed a working group two weeks ago for a clause-by-clause study of the accord.

It comprises nine international legal experts, mainly from the United States and Egypt.

Regarding the outstanding issue of the size of the Jericho area, Dr. Shaath said that Israel had proposed 57 or 58 square kilometres, while the PLO is seeking to establish its authority in every way possible as a prelude to what it hopes will be statehood.

Minor unsettled problems include control of the tele-

(Continued on page 5)

Historic South African polls judged as fair

JOHANNESBURG (Agencies) — Black voters grabbed their last chance to vote in South Africa's historic all-race elections on Friday when polling went into extra time.

Nelson Mandela, appearing presidential in a nationally broadcast television interview, said that despite polling problems in some parts of the country he believed the voting overall would be judged fair.

"I am confident we will be able to pronounce these elections fair and free," he said.

South Africa's financial markets, looking for stability under majority rule after the violent death-bed years of apartheid, appeared to agree. They surged on Friday in their first full session since voting began on Tuesday.

"We will have at the end of the day an announcement that this election... will be free and fair," he told a news conference.

ence at the headquarters of his National Party.

Mr. De Klerk acknowledged that there had been irregularities during the vote, but said the complaints would be dealt with and should not affect the outcome. "There is no evidence to suggest that (irregularities) took place on a large scale," he said.

The head of the body organising South Africa's elections said that overall the poll had been an outstanding success.

But Independent Electoral Commission Chairman Judge Johann Krieger urged the country to be patient during vote counting despite frustration over organisational glitches that forced an extra day's polling in six former black homelands.

"We are doing well," Krieger told a news conference, "over-

all, an outstanding success."

"Urging patience, he warned that a breakdown in administration of the elections on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday would have what he called "a knock-on effect on the next two phases"—counting and calculating the votes.

"Let's maintain good order and patience such as prevailed throughout the country," he said.

Despite predictions of election violence and a spate of bombings early in the week blamed on white extremists

opposed to black rule, most balloting occurred in an atmosphere of calm.

Police moved to avert any further trouble from far-right whites by declaring 15 towns west and southwest of Johannesburg, unrest areas. That gives police expanded powers

(Continued on page 5)



Home News

Government, committee differ over contradicting articles in sales tax law

By Natasha Bukhari
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The chairman of the Lower House of Parliament's Financial Committee, Ali Abul Ragheb, is disappointed with what he calls the government's "unreasonable" opposition to the recommendations made by his committee to amend the draft sales tax law.

"The government wants the draft legislation to be passed according to its own terms, and lawmakers would not accept this," Mr. Abul Ragheb said.

The law, which created a great deal of debate last year, is the main item on the agenda of the House's two-month extraordinary session that started April 17.

In the House's first session, Islamic Action Front (IAF) deputies urged the House to reject the draft law saying that it was imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and that it (the draft law) increases the tax burden on low income people.

In two sessions the House passed six articles of the draft law. Article 5, as passed following the recommendations of the Financial Committee stipulates that the taxed goods and services should be specified in lists attached to the law itself.

However, deputies approved another article that gave the government the right to specify the goods to be exempted from taxation, contrary to the Financial Committee's recommendation that the list be made part of the law itself rather than a flexible set of regulations.

According to Mr. Abul Ragheb, adding a clause to Article 6 gave the government "free hand to monopolise" the list of items exempted from the tax.

Mr. Abul Ragheb told the Jordan Times that the government had presented the House with a "mutilated" draft law that has "double-stating" clauses.

He urged the government not to amend the Financial Committee's recommendations because by doing so, "legal irregularities" would follow with Article 6 and 4." He said that deputies will have to review their votes on

the controversial articles when they vote on the law as a whole and expressed confidence that the lawmakers would vote in favour of the committee's recommendations.

Minister of Finance Sami Gammoh, however, told the Jordan Times Friday that deputies have to go back to Article 4 and amend it in order for Article 6 to be legally effective. Mr. Gammoh said that lawmakers should trust the government to make the "right" decision in regard to the list of items that are subject to taxation and those excluded from it. He added that flexibility in taxation regulations ensures rapid adjustments when required to serve the country's economic and national interests.

"Specifying the exempted items and tying the list down to a law does not allow for any amendments that may be necessary in the future," the minister said.

Deputy Abdul Karim Kabariti, who is also in the House Financial Committee, told the Jordan Times that pragmatism rather than ideological inflexibility is needed in dealing with this issue. "We have to judge matters by their end results and not by the means used to achieve those results," said Mr. Kabariti.

Mr. Kabariti described the House's debate on the draft legislation as a series of attacks and counterattacks, despite what he saw as the House's Financial Committee's efforts to base its recommendations on an all-encompassing study in which many parliamentarian, governmental and political parties have been involved.

Mr. Kabariti, however, said that he expected the government to get its own way at the end of this dispute even if that was through the Upper House of Parliament, which, according to the constitution, can send back any draft law approved by the Lower House of Parliament if it is not satisfied with it.

Deputy Abul Ragheb, on the other hand, said that the government cannot afford to waste time as the draft law has been given the status of an emergency requirement by the IMF.



OFFICIAL DEPARTS — Mali President Alpha Connnery Thursday concluded a three-day visit to Jordan during which he attended the funeral of the late Queen Mother and met with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan to discuss Malijordanian relations and economic cooperation. The president was also guest of honour at the opening of a five-day conference organised by the Lower House of Parliament International Council of Museums (ICOM) at the Royal Cultural Centre and high ranking officials.

Royal family accepts condolences

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Their Royal Highnesses the Princesses and Sheriffs accepted condolences from representatives of all walks of life who called at Raghadan Palace to offer their condolences over the death of the Queen Mother Zein Al Sharaf.

Congratulations were accepted from tribal chiefs, representatives of voluntary societies, social and youth sectors, mayors, heads of village councils, pro-

vincial governors, banks and companies' managers.

Congratulations were also conveyed by Palestinian delegations from director of Noor Al Hussein Foundation, representatives of Girls Scouts and Girl Guides at the Ministry of Education Schools and women delegations from various parts of Jordan.

Crown Prince Hassan also accepted condolences from director general and secretary general of the International Museums Conference.

At Basman Palace, Her Majesty Queen Noor, Their Royal Highnesses Princess Bassma, Princess Taghrid, Prin-

cess Sarvath and Their Royal Highnesses the Princesses and Sheriffs accepted condolences from director of Noor Al Hussein Foundation, representatives of Girls Scouts and Girl Guides at the Ministry of Education Schools and women delegations from various parts of Jordan.

They also accepted condolences from Sheikha Naila Bint Khalifa, head of the Bahraini delegation to the "museums, civilisation and development" conference, currently held in Amman.

Workshop discusses stemming pollution, desertification

RAMTHA (J.T.) — Topics which include air and water pollution and means to stem desertification and handle issues related to industrial pollution are on the agenda of a four-day workshop currently held at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) in conjunction with the American University of Beirut (AUB).

Addressing the opening session Thursday, Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Ahmad Aqileh said that the rising danger of pollution from various sources has prompted Jordan to take drastic measures

to protect the environment and ensure sustainable development.

Recent years have brought with them serious dangers to the environment, which is being threatened by pollution, in the form of desertification, encroachment of construction operations on agricultural land, excessive use of fertilisers and pesticides, the ever increasing population growth, threats to surface and underground water resources and solid and liquid waste, among other dangers, said the minister in his address to delegates representing six Arab countries gathered at JUST.

Tarawneh represents Jordan at Nixon's funeral

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Prince Talal Bin Mohammad was not able to attend the funeral of former U.S. President Richard Nixon on behalf of His Majesty King Hussein bin Talal, due to the sad news of the death of Her Majesty Queen Zein Al Sharaf.

Representing Jordan at the funeral which took place in Yorba Linda, California, on April 27 was Jordan's ambassador to the U.S. Fayed Tarawneh.

World traffic week starts Monday

Road accidents claim 90 lives in three months this year

AMMAN (Petra) — A total of 6,842 road accidents occurred in Jordan in the first three months of this year, causing the death of 90 people and the injury of 2,844 others, the Traffic Department announced Friday.

The department director, Brigadier Ahmad Dmour, who made the announcement, said that most of the accidents were caused by people not abiding by traffic rules and speeding.

Speaking on the eve of Jordan's observance of the World Traffic Week, which starts Monday, Brig. Dmour said that a total of 24,799 road accidents occurred during 1993, resulting in the death of 440 people and the injury of 11,754 others. He added that 57 per cent of the accidents occurred in the Amman region.

Out of these numbers 16,555 resulted from vehicles colliding

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zones and the parents who fail to teach their children the traffic rules.

Brig. Aref said that the Interior Ministry, in cooperation with the concerned social sectors and the Jordanian Society for the Prevention of Road Accidents has worked out programmes and seminars in the course of a week-long campaign to spread awareness among the public concerning accidents in which people are hit by cars.

He said that in the past years such accidents accounted for nearly 20 per cent of the total number of accidents.

Brig. Aref said that the accidents are caused not only by speeding cars and motorists failing to abide by the rules but also by pedestrians who fail to cross the streets at the crossing

Ten political parties call for end to Jordan-bound cargo inspection

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Ten Jordanian Islamist and leftist parties have joined hands to demand a total end to all inspections of Jordan-bound cargo as part of the enforcement of sanctions against Iraq and called on Arab, Islamic, non-aligned and African countries to support the Kingdom's stand.

In a rare joint statement, the 10 parties, including the powerful Islamic Action Front (IAF) and mostly leftist parties, did not directly refer to the agreement Jordan has reached with the U.S. to replace the land-based inspections by a U.S.-led naval task force with a land-based sanctions verification regime.

But it rejected "any inspections in Jordanian territory, whether at sea or on land," as "an infringement of Jordan's sovereignty."

Official party spokesmen were not immediately available for comment, but party sources said the statement was deliberately left vague since the 10 groups, which espouse varying ideologies ranging from Islamic law, socialism, Baathism and pan-Arab nationalism, could not agree on a unified stand to reject the land-based verifications before the modalities of the arrangement were known.

The sources said some of the parties would not outrightly reject the land-based arrangement as long as it is conducted under the direct supervision of the United Nations with no American intervention while others did not want any inspections in any form of shape, they said.

The inspections "constitute an aggression against the Jordanian people, who have paid a heavy price for the Gulf crisis in the form of poverty, high unemployment and social and economic problems," it said, adding that "Zionist domination" of the region through pressuring Jordan into signing peace agreements with Israel was the objective of the continued blockade of Aqaba.

The statement, a copy of which was made available to the Jordan Times, called on members of the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Conference, the Non-Aligned Movement and African countries to "make their voice heard" in support of the Jordanian rejection of the inspections which the parties described as piracy.

It also warned the United Nations, the Security Council, the United States and its allies which are party to the Red Sea inspections that the continued siege of Aqaba would only "deepen people's hostility."

The 10 parties which signed the statement control 20 seats, including the 16 of the Islamic Action Front, in the 80-member Lower House of Parliament.

The signatories to the statement were: The Islamic Action Front, the Jordanian People's Democratic Party, the Jordanian Socialist Democratic Party, the Jordanian Arab Baath Socialist Party, the Jordan Arab Democratic Party, the Jordanian Popular Unity Party, the Jordanian Progressive Democratic Party, the Unionist Arab Democratic Party, the Jordanian People's Democratic Unity Party and Al Mustakbal.

Le Mirage ...

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WHAT'S GOING ON

- ★ Lecture in Arabic entitled "Horizons of Economic Jordanian-Palestinian Relations" by Dr. Tamer Kam at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.
- ★ Lecture in German (with translation into Arabic) entitled "Die Verteilung Jüdischer in Deutschland Und In Der Türkei" by Dr. Dieter Gläde at Goethe-Institut at 6:00 p.m.
- ★ A one-day exhibition by artist Zaidan Ni'meh entitled "A Drawing of The Poems by Poet Abdul Wahab Bayati" at the Phoenix Gallery for Art and Culture (Tel. 695291).
- ★ Exhibition by artists Dr. Ali Ghoul, Hussein Da'seh, Adnan Al Sharif, Abdal Hussein Tawaij, Salman Abbas, and Hafez Al Droubi at Orfali Art Gallery (Tel. 826932).
- ★ Exhibition of women's home-made products (including ceramics, sweets and handicrafts) at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition by paintings by artist Bahjat Al Hakim at Alia Art Gallery (Tel. 639303).
- ★ Exhibition by Jordanian and Iraqi artists at the Italian Language Centre (9:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 669348)

The Indian Community living in Jordan

offers heartfelt condolences to His Majesty King Hussein, His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, and Her Royal Highness Princess Bassma and other members of the Royal Family. Over the passing of

Her Majesty Queen Zein Al Sharaf, the Queen Mother May her soul rest in peace

ANNOUNCEMENT

Photo Competition

Organised by

The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature

On the occasion of Arbor Day, the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature announces a photo competition, to feature nature in Jordan: Flowers, birds, trees or landscapes.

Conditions:

1. Each participant should provide between five and 10 slide-photos, printed, along with the negatives.
 2. The size of the photo should not be smaller than 18 x 12 cm.
 3. Photos are either in colour or black and white.
 4. Last date for participation is 20/5/1994.
 5. Results, prizes and certificates of the winners will be announced at a reception, and an exhibition will be held on the occasion of the World Environment Day, Sunday, 5/6/1994.
 6. The prizes:
- Flight ticket from Royal Jordanian
Flight ticket from Middle East Airlines
Camera (Yashica MF-2) presented by its agent Yacoub Berberian and Son Co.
Four metal Electro frames of excellent quality, 25x30 cm, presented by its Agent Yacoub Berberian and Son Co.
Citizen-watch presented by Michael Jewelry/Salt.
PS: Studio Haig, Agent of Mitsubishi Films, will also take part in this competition.

Board of Directors, Staff and Children of The American Community School

offer their heart felt condolences to His Majesty King Hussein, the Royal Hashemite Family and the people of Jordan for the loss of Her Majesty the Queen Mother Zein Al Sharaf

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S. Africa's new life

A NEW era has dawned on South Africa, the scene of decades long tension and turmoil between the black majority and the white minority, who ruled the country with an iron fist. With African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela becoming, as forecast, the new president of the country as a result of the four-day long elections in which a very high percentage of the eligible voters took part, it is the beginning of a national rebirth in which the right to self-determination for all the people of South Africa, irrespective of their colour or race, was exercised.

"We have now moved from an era of pessimism, turmoil and conflict into a new era of hope, reconciliation and nation-building," Mandela was quoted as saying on the occasion of the belated transformation of his country from slavery into freedom and liberty. It is noteworthy that his new vision for the future is one for reconciliation between the whites and blacks rather than one of confrontation between them.

There is an obvious message in the newly emerging political story of South Africa. It is clearly one that strengthens the conviction in peoples' right to determine their political, economic and social future and vindicates all others who are still yearning for national salvation. It is also proof of the bankruptcy of making distinctions between people on the basis of colour, race or political opinion. The national liberation war that was successfully waged by the blacks of South Africa is one that deserves to be celebrated and commemorated by all the Third World, especially by peoples who are still struggling for freedom.

Still the political democratisation of South Africa is only the beginning of the new experience in the nation-building. Much more needs to be done as what lies ahead is even harder to accomplish. The new black-led government will inherit a national legacy of huge national debt and backlogs in housing, education and health care. Without the cooperation of the whites and the dismantling of the neo-Nazi Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB), the road ahead would be strewn with booby-traps. At least Zulu Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi should lend his support to the new African leadership by putting aside his provincial concerns in favour of the overall national interests of all South Africans. The new South Africa needs all the support it could muster not only from all South Africans, be they white or Zulus, or otherwise, but also the whole world community who has a vested interest in getting rid of apartheid once and for all.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour called on Arab countries to develop their relations with China at all levels and prevent Israel from damaging such relations in any form and under any circumstances. Taher Adwan said that the Arabs have big chances for opening their markets and their trade exchanges with China and have the opportunity to learn from this Asian giant how to develop at the social, political and economic levels. Since the middle of the 20th century, the Arabs and the Chinese have maintained very strong ties, and Beijing has always supported the Arab Nation's just causes, said the writer. We have to remember that when Israel had diplomatic ties with Islamic countries like Iran under the Shah, Beijing refused to recognise the Jewish state and supported the Arab rights. It is regrettable to see the Arabs failing to utilise such situation and to bolster trade, industrial and economic ties with China which is rising as a superpower at present, said the writer. While all indications point to the fact that China is fast becoming a super economic power, the Arabs are still dragging their feet in matters related to bolstering their ties with Beijing, added the writer.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour expressed regret that Arab states are trying to end their conflict with Israel only to open the door wide for a conflict among themselves. Mohammad Kawash said the hostile powers are now trying to stir trouble for Arab countries to keep them at odds with one another and so help Israel to dominate their affairs. With weak mini-Arab states, Israel is guaranteed the upper hand in this region, and with the religious, ethnic and social conflicts rising within the Arab countries there can be no danger for the Jewish state, he said. The writer said that Israel and its allies are currently striving to prevent the Arabs from adopting a common stand with which they can abort Israel's objectives, and are desperately stirring internal conflicts to achieve these goals. Even those countries surrounding Israel have failed to adopt a coordinated position with regard to the peace process, and there is little hope that they would adopt a joint stand, said the writer. He expressed fear that the internal strife within the Arab World could spill over the border and pit some Arab countries in armed conflicts against one another.

Jordanian Perspective

By Dr. Musa Keilani

No quid pro quo for Aqaba

THE AMERICAN acceptance of Jordan's proposal that the sea-based inspections of Aqaba-bound cargo by a U.S.-led naval task force be replaced with a land-based regime has, in principle, removed a major hurdle in the Middle East peace process and offered a face-saving formula for both Jordan and the U.S.

The standoff, sparked after Jordan made it clear that its return to the peace talks hinged on an end to the damaging inspections by the enforcers of the international sanctions against Iraq, was long in the making. Our memories are fresh when James Baker, the secretary of state of the Bush administration, used to make promises after promises that the Kingdom's grievances would be looked into and addressed but with little happening on the ground.

Now that Warren Christopher, Mr. Baker's successor in a new administration, has announced in public after considerable foot-dragging that Washington would accept an Aqaba-based regime for verifying the sanctions, it is welcome news indeed.

But that does not mean we are roaring to get back to the peace negotiations with Israel. We would like to see what kind of modalities and mechanisms would accompany the arrangement. And that was precisely the reason behind His Majesty King Hussein's non-committal answers during the London press conference after meeting Mr. Christopher on Monday.

Our experience over the years has taught us that no one offers anything without strings attached and we are anxious to see that strings are attached to the Aqaba arrangement. For one thing, as Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali made clear few hours before Mr. Christopher spoke on Monday, the Aqaba regime should not mean "inspections" because that would amount to an infringement on the sovereignty of the Kingdom.

Jordan has a record of total and complete respect for, and adherence to, the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council as a matter of principle. The "new world order,"

whose approach to Jordan is of a traditional carrot and stick, had better give us the credit that we deserve in this context and refrain from continued humiliation of Jordan as a country and Jordanians as a people.

Quite simply, Jordan should be trusted to adhere to the terms of the embargo on Iraq. To impose unacceptable conditions and terms for the presence of Lloyds Register, a neutral, international organisation of repute, at Aqaba and insist on "inspections" and "veto authority" would be counter-productive.

As Dr. Majali said Monday, Lloyds Register people are free to see the cargo unloaded at Aqaba when Jordan's customs department opens them for inspections, as warranted by the Kingdom's laws and regulations, and report to the U.N. Sanctions Committee of its "observations." We would not accept a situation when goods imported by a Jordanian for consumption in the local market or for use in local industries held back simply because the cargo is "suspect" and should receive the green signal from an external party before it could leave Aqaba port.

We hope that the repeated use of the word "inspections" by Mr. Christopher during his press conference in London on Monday was not a signal that Washington would insist on granting the Lloyds Register people the right to subject Jordanian imports to the whims of those waging an all-out campaign against Iraq and Jordan.

Hopefully, the days ahead will unfold the "technical modalities" and the "fine tuning" that the U.S. has been talking about in the context of the Aqaba verifications.

In the meantime, those anxious to see as little as possible in food and medicine to the Iraqi people should respect our government's finding that what they call front companies are legitimate Jordanian entities functioning within the confines of Jordanian laws and regulations. It is illogical to rule that the imports of those entities are subject to a blanket ban regardless of whether the cargo is exempt from the sanctions

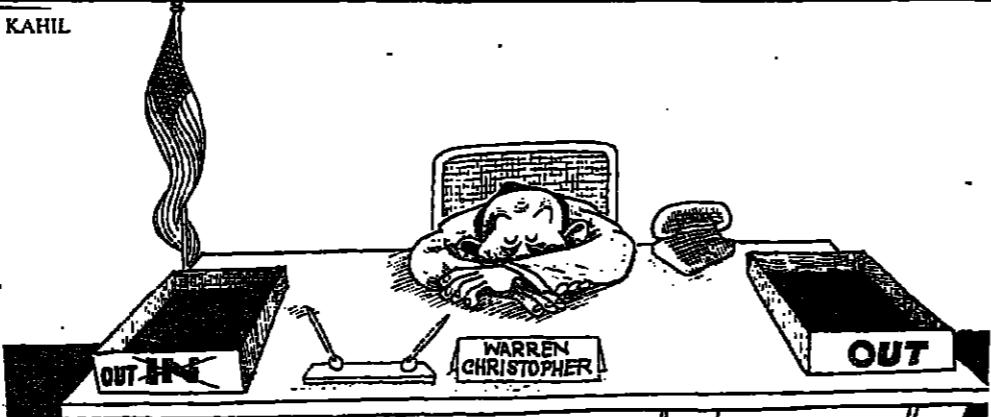
or has the approval of the U.N. Sanctions Committee simply because someone, somewhere, believes that they are companies acting as "front, back or the middle" as our prime minister put it.

What our officials would not say in public, but we as Jordanians are free to say, is that the amount of Iraq-bound cargo flowing through other regional ports is six times of that coming through Aqaba. Yet we don't find any anxiety on anyone's part to have "inspections", "verification regime" or "observations" in place at any of those ports.

Beyond that, however, is the fact that the sanctions, when imposed, were aimed at forcing Iraq to satisfy the demands of the U.N. Security Council and definitely not at starving the Iraqi people. As such, food and medicine imports for Iraq through Aqaba, regardless of who imports them, should not be subject to the political whims and fancies of anyone and should not be used as a tool to achieve political purposes, whether in the context of Iraq or Jordan.

In the same vein, it is our sincere hope that Washington's acceptance of an Aqaba-based verification is not another stone of American pressure on Jordan to make "dramatic gestures" in the peace process. The problems that Jordan faces and the price we paid for the continued Red Sea inspections, and the Kingdom's principles that guide its quest for negotiated peace in the Middle East are two different issues by any standard.

It is not acceptable at all for anyone to suggest or insist that now that the U.S. had "magnanimously" accepted what, by all norms and laws, should not have been an issue of demand and compliance at all in the first place. Jordan should oblige Israel at the expense of its national rights. It is simply a no-go area and we hope those who want to storm the barriers and create fait accompli realise and appreciate that Jordan is committed to negotiated peace, a peace that is honourable and meets the legitimate principles of international law and U.N. Security Council resolutions. Anything less than that is simply a non-starter.



THE WEEK IN PRINT

U.S. should follow words with deeds and lift Aqaba siege

Reviewed By Elia Nasrallah

ARABIC DAILY newspapers in the past week gave prominence to their editorials to the passing away of the late Queen Zein Al Sharaf, the Queen Mother, but also discussed the Middle East question and a host of domestic issues.

Commenting on the scheduled visit to the Middle East by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, a columnist in Al Dustour said that U.S. official's tour could be more significant than any of his earlier visits following Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's announcement that Israel could remove settlements in the Golan in exchange for peace with Syria. But the settlement issue is not the only problem impeding the process of peace between Israel and Syria, said Tamer Al Adwan. What Syria demands is total peace along all the tracks on the one hand and recognition of the Palestinian people's rights in their homeland on the other, said the writer.

Al Ra'i daily commented on Mr. Christopher's announcement that the siege on Aqaba would end by paying tribute to His Majesty King Hussein's firm stand that helped bring about this favourable decision. The paper said that Washington's response to Jordan's demands was a result of the clear message by King Hussein that the Kingdom would not take part in further peace talks unless the siege has been lifted. Jordan, said the paper, is not violating the sanctions on Iraq and therefore has a strong point in this matter. It said that Washington has now removed the hurdle that impeded Jordan's participation in the peace process.

Commenting on Mr. Christopher's statements that Washington and Amman keep strong friendly relations, a columnist in Al Ra'i said that words are not enough.

Tareq Masarweh said Washington should prove by deeds rather than words its real friendship by ending the siege on Aqaba and respecting the national aspirations of the Arab people.

Jordan, said the writer, is part of the Arab World and feels closer to the other Arab countries than any foreign nation, and strives to protect Arab citizens and end injustices done to them. He said that neither the U.S. administration nor Mr. Christopher are really concerned about the real feelings of the Jordanian people and their national aspirations and therefore this can be no means be friendly to the Kingdom.

Mohammad Kawash, another columnist in Al Dustour, lauded a recent agreement between the Palestinian leadership and Hamas on the main policies for ending Israeli occupation of Palestinian land. Both Hamas and Fatah are concerned with ending the occupation of Arab and it was natural for their leaders to conclude an agreement on cooperation to achieve that goal, said the writer.

Lawyer Hani Dahleh wrote an article in Al Dustour in which he stressed the significance of the professional unions in Jordan's politics.

Over the past four decades, the unions played a key role in Jordan's political arena and its members, who are doctors, engineers, pharmacists and lawyers, rep-

resent the cream of the intellectual sector of the country.

He criticised those voices which call for the unions to remain confined to their professional work and to leave the politics to the political parties

A columnist in Al Dustour commented on a government ban on smoking inside government offices by saying that the order should have been coupled with a solution to the problem of smokers—who spend at least six hours in their offices.

Mohammad Daoud said that the way the ban was imposed by no means be implemented since the provision was made for creating places to the smokers to smoke. No doubt, he said, the smokers are bound to violate the rules. Voicing appreciation to the Health Ministry's drive to end the habit of smoking, the writer said unless smokers are allowed to smoke one way or another, their services to the public are bound to be adversely affected.

Saleh Ekour, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab, said that the government seems to be convinced of the need to give raises to government employees but has no sufficient funds to do that.

The writer said that the government can indirectly help the limited-income groups, who are mostly government employees, by being firm against merchants who manipulate prices and the greedy traders who abide by no rules. He said that the government ought to impose stricter control on merchants who sell auto spare parts, electric appliances and food which all citizens need and ought to fix the rates of doctors and end the greed of hospitals in a manner that would help the ordinary citizen.

If the government lacks sufficient funds for a raise to its employees said the writer, at least it can utilise its authority in order to reduce the burden on the Jordanian citizens.

Ahmad Dabbas, another columnist in Sawt Al Shaab, urged the government to introduce stricter measures designed to deter people from throwing waste from car windows.

The writer said that appeals to the public to stop the bad habit have proved futile, and there was need for strict penalties to be imposed if we are to protect the environment and keep the streets and public squares clean and safe.

"Watergate was a watershed. It turned presidents into potential crooks," said sociologist Todd Gitlin, author of "The Sixties."

Mr. Nixon's duplicity aggravated a "fundamental cultural malaise" marked by the conviction that whatever appears in public is a facade, said sociologist Jeffrey Goldfarb, author of "The Cynical

IMF official casts a line to Algiers

By Francis Ghiles

Mr. Michel Camdessus, managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), has taken a huge gamble. So has General Liamine Zeroual, the Algerian head of state. If they fail, neither the IMF nor the Algerian army will have another chance to save north Africa's largest country from a fate which a senior U.S. official likened to "creeping Afghanistan."

Mr. Camdessus has asked the board of the IMF to extend a \$1bn (£680m) one-year standby loan to Algeria, which the board is expected to approve by the end of the month. He has called on Algeria's foreign creditors to follow the IMF and provide the country with a further \$80m-\$90m which it will need to see its country slide into total anarchy.

It may be that the head of state wanted to replace him with a technocrat who carries no political weight and whose job is that of the surgeon, a man who can be disposed of easily if the going gets rough.

Of this total, \$3.5bn would come from the rescheduling of the principal repayments of debt owed to its sovereign creditors, who are due to meet at a Paris Club meeting in mid-May; \$1.5bn would come from the World Bank, African Development Bank and Arab Monetary Fund loans; \$1bn from the European Union; and the balance from export credits which would be maintained at last year's level.

Algeria has already been asked to take its medicine. Three weeks ago the price of nine staple foodstuffs—including flour, bread and milk—were increased by between 25 and 100 per cent. This followed similar rises in the cost of petrol and domestic fuel. Other increases are intended to follow.

The dinar has been de-

valued by 40 per cent and interest rates raised. Measures to liberalise foreign trade are expected this week. A later stage in the process will require state companies to shed excess labour.

Mr. Redha Malek, the prime minister since last August, announced last week he was resigning. Foreign observers do not agree on why. It may be that he disagreed with the policy now openly pursued by Gen. Zeroual of trying to talk to those members of the banned fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) who do not wish to see their country slide into total anarchy.

It may be that the head of state wanted to replace him with a technocrat who carries no political weight and whose job is that of the surgeon, a man who can be disposed of easily if the going gets rough.

Mr. Mokdad Sifi, who is taking over, certainly fits that description. He comes from Tebessa, a town close to the Tunisian border which has provided many key figures to the Direction Générale de La Sécurité Nationale, the fount of much power in Algeria over 30 years.

Days before Mr. Malek's departure, Mr. Camdessus had expressed, in an interview with Algerian state television, much enthusiasm and hope about the process of economic reform upon which he felt Algeria was embarked.

Many Algerians hope the IMF chief's judgment is better vindicated by events than it was after the last agreement with the Fund. That accord, signed in June 1991, was followed promptly by the dismissal of the then refor-

mist prime minister, Mr. Mouloud Hamrouche. Mr. Camdessus heaped praise on his successor, Mr. Sid Ahmed Ghazali, whose policies went on in effect to destroy the economic reforms to which the IMF had just given its imprimatur.

The position today is incomparably worse. Some 4,000 Algerians have died since elections, which the FIS was poised to win, were suspended in January 1992. Fierce repression has not prevented large areas of Algeria, including some cities, from slipping out of the state's control, notably at night. The hardline Islamic Armed Group is committing acts of terror on ordinary Algerians and has targeted foreigners, many of whom have fled the country.

Although this has helped bring Algeria's economy to its current state of semi-collapse, a main factor has been the fall in world prices of hydrocarbons, which account for 90 per cent of the country's foreign income. Foreign debt repayments would, in the absence of an agreement with the country's western creditors, absorb virtually all Algeria's forecast \$9bn income this year.

As they consider the possible fate of a reform package now being put together, the country's foreign creditors are, in the words of one senior European banker, "functioning on a wing and a prayer."

So are 26m Algerians. As one sardonically commented: "The difference is that we are risking our lives while Western countries are only risking their money."

The Financial Times.

The darker side of the legacy: a nation of cynics

By Jill Lawrence
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A dark side of Richard M. Nixon's legacy endures today in a nation of cynics. The Watergate deeds that led to his forced resignation deepened and solidified the public mistrust bequeathed by his predecessor.

Lyndon B. Johnson's deceptive accounts of the Vietnam war opened a yawning chasm for all that is corrupt and corrosive in government. Not least of them is the permanent shadow of impeachment on the political landscape.

Mr. Nixon was the only U.S. president to resign. He quit after a break-in at the Watergate Hotel in Washington unleashed a scandal over harassment of his political opponents, taped telephone conversations and obstructing investigators.

S. African polls judged fair

(Continued from page 1)
rural areas stymied by a lack of ballot papers and other election problems had the extra polling day.

While the rest of the country finished its three-day election Thursday, people in areas encompassing the former black homelands of Transkei, Ciskei, KwaZulu, Venda, Lebowa and Gazankulu were given a fourth day.

Judge Krieger briefed Mr. Mandela and President F.W. De Klerk on latest developments Friday afternoon, saying the extension had served its purpose.

"Would he declare the election free and fair, reporters asked.

"So far, there is no reason to say it isn't," Mr. Krieger replied.

Military helicopters reached remote villages in KwaZulu, where some polling stations have never opened. At Nongoma, the home of Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini, trucks were sent deep into the mountains to collect voters.

"This is a vast area. People are poor and they haven't been able to reach us," said election official Carl Holdt.



Election volunteers issue voter cards on Friday to many South Africans who could not vote and were granted an extra polling day. This photo was taken in Ndwedwe in Natal/Kwazulu (AFP photo)

Christopher gets Israeli plan

(Continued from page 1)
way of peace with Syria.

Israel has demanded that Syria specify whether it will agree to full peace with Israel that will include open borders and diplomatic exchanges.

"We've got a lot of hard work ahead of us," Mr. Christopher said of his trip to Damascus on Saturday. After returning to Israel on Sunday he will go to Cairo on Tuesday for the expected signing of an agreement Wednesday to give Palestinians self-rule in the West Bank town of Jericho and in the Gaza Strip.

Mr. Rabin and Mr. Christopher refused to provide any details of the package being delivered to Mr. Assad and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Sharaa. Also without elaboration, Mr. Rabin told

Tribal feuding was hindering ballot distribution in some parts, but elsewhere chiefs and community leaders were sending runners to guide the election officials, Holdt said.

"It's like the birth of a baby — problems, anxiety and joy," said a local magistrate, Linda Khaba.

At the Mdwedwe poll in KwaZulu, the presiding officer, Bonang Khumalo, said many teenagers under 18 were getting identification cards allowing them to vote. No one was willing to brave the region's political tensions to stop the extension, he said.

In two violent black townships outside Johannesburg, where there was not supposed to be balloting Friday, polls were surrounded by people demanding to vote, according to election officials. They said the election monitors felt their lives were in danger and opened the polls, but the ballots would be treated separately.

Where polls had closed, weary election workers prepared for counting, scheduled to begin at 6 a.m. (0400 GMT) Saturday. Final results were anticipated by Sunday.



Secretary of State Warren Christopher at their joint press conference in Cairo on Thursday (AFP)

Israel, PLO sign economic agreement

(Continued from page 1)

foreign businessmen and Palestinians living abroad to invest.

As part of the overall plan to grant the Palestinians autonomy, the accord will limit some trade but allow the Palestinians to set taxes on imports and incomes.

The Palestinians will also regulate banks in the territories.

But the accord failed to include provisions to establish a Palestinian currency, a symbol of statehood rejected by the Israelis and insisted on by the Palestinians until late in the talks.

Mr. Shohat and Mr. Courcier signed the agreement in a baroque hall of the French foreign ministry.

"There are many events of sadness in the world, but luckily we have these moments of privileged importance," said France's foreign minister, Alain Juppe.

He expressed the hope that other agreements would soon be concluded setting out the framework for relations between Israelis and Palestinians following the September signing of the autonomy accord.

"The news from Cairo is encouraging," Mr. Juppe added.

"This conflict has been costly, both in physical and material loss," said Mr. Shohat.

"The time has come to invest our energies in the pursuit of peace and prosperity."

Mr. Shohat also noted that the agreement will "defend our economy from an influx of goods."

The Palestinian side did not waver from the sober tone it has maintained throughout the talks. This is a "contractual agreement for a temporary period," said Mr. Courcier, "and it will be reviewed."

Lack of an economic accord would have complicated implementation of the main agreement, since international aid

totalling \$2.4 billion was being held up as donors waited for a spending plan.

Addressing his domestic audience over Israeli radio, Mr. Shohat said: "It's a good agreement which upholds Israel's economic interests and allows the Palestinians to develop their own economy."

Under the economic accord for the period of interim self-rule, the Palestinians are to have similar imports and customs policies as those of the Jewish state.

The Palestinians will be able to import goods from Arab countries in agreed, limited quantities," under the deal.

The PLO has foregone demands for an independent central bank but will set up its own monetary authority to control and monitor the banking and financial sectors.

The two sides failed to agree on a Palestinian currency, and the shekel will continue to be used in the territories.

On Palestinian money, the accord merely said the joint committee "will continue to discuss ... the possibility of introducing mutually agreed Palestinian currency or a temporary alternative currency arrangement."

"We say currencies are issued only by states," said Daniel Shek, a spokesman for the Israeli delegation. "There was no economic justification or logic in the current condition of the territories."

Amin Haddad, deputy head of the Palestinian delegation, sighed when asked how soon he hoped for a currency.

"In the near future I think, no time frame," he told a reporter shortly before the signing. "It was one of the sticking points."

But he added: "I'm not saying we're going to set up a state tomorrow. I'm saying that the first steps towards

setting up a Palestinian state have been taken."

The money is desperately needed to begin rebuilding the devastated occupied territories and set up a Palestinian government.

After about 450 hours of talks over the past six months, the main final sticking point centered on customs, both sides said.

Overall agreement was announced late Thursday night, but meetings continued until 8 a.m. (0600 GMT) Friday, 90 minutes before the scheduled signing.

Last-minute disagreement surfaced Thursday on imports into the occupied territories, especially from Egypt and Jordan, an issue that was said Wednesday night to be settled, according to sources close to the talks speaking on condition of anonymity.

Israeli officials were concerned that cheap imports could flood through the territories and into Israel.

The final agreement ensured the free movement of goods except for five items on which quotas were imposed for five years: tomatoes, cucumbers, potatoes, eggs and poultry.

The agreement also covered tourism, labour, insurance and fuel sales. Gasoline in the territories is not to be sold more than 15 per cent less than in Israel.

A joint economic committee will coordinate implementation of the accord.

The economic accord is the second to be signed since September. A security agreement was signed in Cairo in February.

Self-rule set for signing on May 4

(Continued from page 1)

phone and postal service and registration of transients in Jericho and Gaza.

According to Israeli sources in Cairo, Israel agreed Thursday night that the Palestinians could have their own postage stamps and passports, all considered symbols of their aspiration for sovereignty.

However, the issues of Palestinians at border crossings and the size of Jericho remained to be dealt with by Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat Tuesday night in Cairo.

Also, the sources said, the PLO was demanding recognition of territorial waters reaching nine miles out from the Mediterranean shores of Gaza.

Mr. Peres said of the period of three years after which the permanent status will begin, "That is why we have decided that the Palestinians will have laissez-passer documents valid for three years."

"The document, which is both a laissez-passer and a passport, for a period of three years after which the permanent status will begin," Mr. Peres told Israel Radio.

Under the Sept. 13 declaration of principles for autonomy, the interim period was to last five years.

"Permanent status negotiations will commence as soon as possible but not later than the beginning of the third year of the interim period," the declaration states.

"We have decided to start negotiations on the final status after the second year of autonomy and they will have to end one year later," Mr. Peres said, setting a timetable for the first time.

Mr. Rabin said the Cairo accord to be signed would serve as a model for all the Israeli-occupied territories to be granted autonomy, not just Gaza and Jericho.

He also called on Arab leaders to attend next Wednesday's signing in the Egyptian capital "to show that the accord opens a new era in relations between Israel and the Arab World."

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Jordan to ease restrictions on Palestinians

(Continued from page 1)

we decided to ease these rules."

Jordan's September measures included limiting family visits, the main category of travellers coming to Jordan, and introduced extra interrogations at the bridge to determine the reason of travel.

The changes were in response to Israeli measures to slash the price of exit permits to \$42 from \$170 and ease paper work, which increased numbers of Palestinians travelling into Jordan.

Another official, speaking to the AP on condition of anonymity, said the government was planning to allow Palestinians free entry and exit.

"For example, a woman who is married to a Jordanian will be granted a three-year residency permit instead of one month," he told the AP.

He also said the Jordanian decision was prompted by "imminent Palestinian self-rule," which hopefully will encourage Palestinians to stay in their homeland and hinder Israeli expulsion plans.

Since Jordan severed legal

and administrative ties with the West Bank in July 1988, it introduced measures aimed at curbing the number of Palestinians who were prompted by an ailing economy in their homeland to seek better living conditions here.

It mainly allowed in businessmen, students and sick people who sought treatment here or abroad as well as tourists and those who came for family reunions.

The Kingdom also changed transit procedures. It gave Palestinians who reside in the West Bank temporary two-year passports and revoked their citizenship rights in Jordan.

Based on this understanding, said Mr. Hammad, Jordan was keen to keep "the open bridges policies" with Palestinians in the occupied territories since the 1967 war.

"These policies, though criticised by some parties, have contributed to maintaining national contacts with the inhabitants of the occupied Arab lands and to enhancing their pan-Arab belonging," he said, adding that Jordan maintained this policy despite its economic, political and demographic consequences.

Christopher gets Israeli plan

(Continued from page 1)
way of peace with Syria.

Israel has demanded that Syria specify whether it will agree to full peace with Israel that will include open borders and diplomatic exchanges.

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Mr. Rabin and Mr. Christopher refused to provide any details of the package being delivered to Mr. Assad and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Sharaa. Also without elaboration, Mr. Rabin told

reporters he had made "demands" of the United States.

He apparently was referring to technology and other elements of an early-warning system. Clinton administration officials, eager to have Israel trade land for peace with all its Arab neighbours, already have indicated American troops could be stationed on the Golan Heights as part of an international peacekeeping force.

"Israel is interested in achieving peace with the three neighbouring Arab countries beyond the peace with Egypt," Mr. Rabin said after the second of two 90-minute meetings with Mr. Christopher.

"And we appreciate your effort in bringing the Syrian and Israeli positions closer," Mr. Rabin said.

Yemen crisis flares

(Continued from page 1)

no official figures for casualties have been released.

Reports from Aden said, however, that the danger of further bloody clashes eased Friday after the southern brigade retreated to the mountains around Amran.

Military officials of the Aden-based Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) said the 1,200 troops pulled out after reinforcements of northern troops, including elite Republican Guards, arrived at Amran.

Yemeni journalists who visited the scene said the northern troops gained the upper hand in the fighting which began on Wednesday, and the southern forces sought refuge with an allied tribe, the Bakil.

YSP officials described the southern forces' retreat as a "brilliant tactical manoeuvre," which avoided unnecessary casualties.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh blamed South Yemen "secessionists" for the fighting, and warned them to halt the provocations.

The official SABA news agency said Mr. Saleh, visiting northern troops wounded in the clashes, appealed to the southerners "to see reason and to adopt peaceful dialogue as a means of resolving differences."

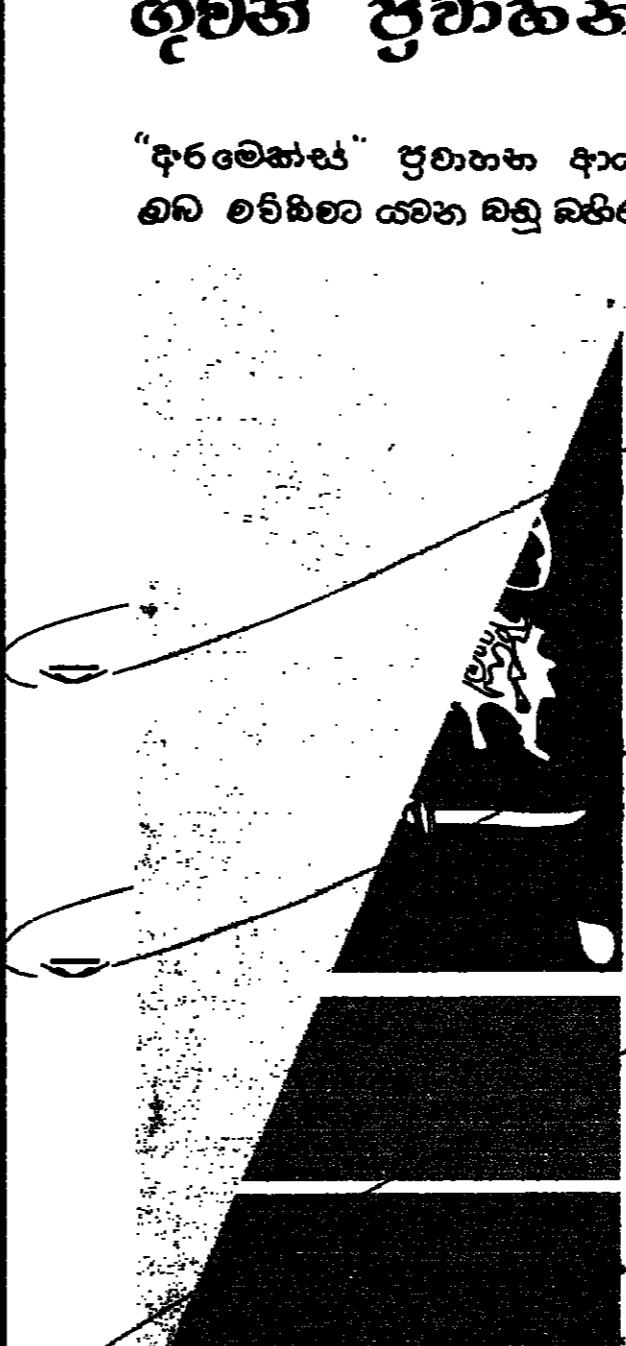
A pro-YSP newspaper, October 14, said Friday northern troops based in the south were reinforcing their posi-

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JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	195,208	7,422	7,422	7,422	7,422	7,422
JORDAN EXCHANGE BANK	13,158	53,200	53,200	92,500	53,200	53,200
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	3,415	4,750	4,710	4,550	4,750	4,550
DEUTSCHE DEVELOPMENT BANK	1,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
THE HORIZON BANK	1,475	3,150	3,150	3,150	3,150	3,150
OMAN BANK	1,475	5,720	5,820	5,720	5,820	5,720
ARAB JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	892,842	3,192	3,192	3,082	3,192	3,082
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	225,200	3,150	3,150	3,150	3,150	3,150
ARAB BANK FOR SAUDI & INVESTMENT	1,475	2,950	2,950	2,950	2,950	2,950
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	59,072	5,126	5,030	4,940	5,126	4,940
BEST BANK SAUDI INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	11,593	3,950	3,950	3,900	3,950	3,900
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	1,475	2,950	2,950	2,950	2,950	2,950
ARABIA BANK	1,475	2,840	2,840	2,840	2,840	2,840
ARABIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	1,475	2,840	2,840	2,840	2,840	2,840
ARABIA SEAS INSURANCE	24,265	2,550	2,620	2,620	2,550	2,620
SYNDICATE INSURANCE	4,550	4,550	4,550	4,550	4,550	4,550
GENERAL INSURANCE	49,115	3,150	3,560	3,620	3,150	3,620
GENERAL INSURANCE	240	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
SOCIAL INSURANCE & REINSURANCE	421	3,160	3,250	3,250	3,160	3,250
ARAB LIFE INSURANCE	4,895	5,000	4,820	4,820	5,000	4,820
ARABIC LIFE INSURANCE	1,475	2,840	2,840	2,840	2,840	2,840
THE NATIONAL INSURANCE	4,067	2,950	2,950	3,140	2,950	3,140
JOHNSON ELECTRIC POWER	87,042	2,050	2,050	2,050	2,050	2,050
ARABIC ELECTRIC POWER	34,478	1,495	1,545	1,495	1,495	1,495
ARABIC DISTRICT ELECTRICITY	22,322	5,000	4,820	4,820	5,000	4,820
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	22,145	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
JORDAN TOURISM & CONFERENCES	5,959	6,720	6,710	6,720	6,720	6,720
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	61,304	4,225	4,160	4,160	4,225	4,160
NETHERLANDS INDUSTRIES	16,928	1,550	1,550	1,550	1,550	1,550
PETRA ENTERPRISES & HOLDINGS	2,744	4,655	4,520	4,520	4,655	4,520
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	246,143	2,840	2,840	2,840	2,840	2,840
NETHERLANDS REPAIR & MAINTENANCE	1,475	2,840	2,840	2,840	2,840	2,840
ARABIC PETROLEUM & EDUCATION	20,223	7,110	7,205	7,140	7,110	7,205
JORDAN TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	22,303	6,950	6,800	6,700	6,950	6,800
ARMED FORCES MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	20,497	7,110	7,150	7,120	7,110	7,150
JORDANIAN COTTON COTTON MANUFACTURING	127,497	7,400	7,400	7,400	7,400	7,400
JORDANIAN COTTON COTTON MANUFACTURING	127,497	7,400	7,400	7,400	7,400	7,400
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	18,706	8,500	8,500	8,150	8,500	8,150
JORDAN CARBON	2,744	7,820	7,820	7,820	7,820	7,820
JORDAN CHEMICALS & AGRICULTURAL	22,712	6,890	6,700	6,720	6,890	6,700
ARABIC PHARMACEUTICALS	29,494	1,550	1,550	1,550	1,550	1,550
JORDAN DRUGSTORES	20,223	7,110	7,205	7,140	7,110	7,205
JORDAN GAS	285	2,800	2,850	2,850	2,800	2,850
JORDAN PETROLEUM & MANUFACTURING	2,744	4,300	4,300	4,300	4,300	4,300
THE PUBLIC BANK	1,475	2,840	2,840	2,840	2,840	2,840
ARABIC PETROLEUM & MANUFACTURING	2,744	4,300	4,300	4,300	4,300	4,300
ARABIC PETROLEUM & TRADING	2,744	4,300	4,300	4,300	4,300	4,300
JORDAN MEDICAL CORPORATION	53,955	1,100	1,090	1,070	1,100	1,090
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY	1,467	1,450	1,440	1,400	1,450	1,440
INTERARABIC PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	982	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
JORDAN PETROCHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	10,200	1,550	1,550	1,550	1,550	1,550
ARABIC PETROLEUM & MANUFACTURING	13,306	2,950	2,900	2,870	2,950	2,900
AL-AZIZ INDUSTRIES	11,895	7,950	7,950	7,950	7,950	7,950
ARABIC INDUSTRIES	46,409	7,400	7,350	7,350	7,400	7,350
ARABIC PETROLEUM & TRADING	12,100	1,550	1,550	1,550	1,550	1,550
JORDAN PRECAST CONCRETE INDUSTRY	7,653	2,050	1,970	1,900	2,050	1,970
NATIONAL CEMENT & MANUFACTURING	3,278	0,340	0,340	0,330	0,340	0,330
ARABIC PETROLEUM & CHEMICALS	5,057	6,930	6,820	6,770	6,930	6,820
JORDAN PETROLEUM & CHEMICALS	6,220	3,150	3,140	3,030	3,150	3,140
ARABIC PETROLEUM & CHEMICALS	4,372	8,870	8,860	8,840	8,870	8,860
ARABIC PETROLEUM & CHEMICALS	1,161	2,110	2,010	2,110	2,110	2,010
INTERARABIC INDUSTRIES	12,125	4,910	4,800	4,850	4,910	4,800
BRAND TOTAL	5,437,623					

Financial Markets in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets	
Currency	New York Close Date 27/4/1994
Sterling Pound	1.5045 1.5062
Deutsche Mark	1.6723 1.6734
Swiss Franc	1.4279 1.4275
French Franc	5.7345 5.7511**
Japanese Yen	102.33 102.38
European Currency Unit	1.1555 1.1537*
USD per Yen	Yen 100 opening = 1.50 USD, 1.50 closing.
Euromarket Interest Rates	Date: 26/4/1994
Currency	1 MTH 3 MTHS 6 MTHS 12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	3,6300 3,9400 4,3800 5,0000
Sterling Pound	4,8160 4,6400 5,1300 5,4400
Deutsche Mark	5,2500 5,1300 5,0600 5,0600
Swiss Franc	3,6900 3,6900 3,7500 3,7500
French Franc	5,6900 5,6900 5,6300 5,6300
Japanese Yen	2,0600 2,0600 2,1900 2,1800
European Currency Unit	5,7500 5,7500 5,7500 5,8100
Interest rate bid rates for eurodollar, covering U.S. Dollars 100,000 equivalent.	
Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin	Date: 26/4/1994
Currency	Bid Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6990 0.7010
Sterling Pound	1.0510 1.0563
Deutsche Mark	0.6172 0.6193
Swiss Franc	1.1885 1.1912
French Franc	0.1215 0.1221
Japanese Yen	0.6808 0.6842
Dutch Guilder	0.3713 0.3732
Swedish Krona	***** *****
Italian Lira	0.0434 0.0436
Belgian Franc	***** *****
Per 100 Other Currencies	Date: 26/4/1994
Currency	Bid Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.6310 1.6500
Lebanese Lira	0.640400 0.041735
Saudi Riyal	0.1561 0.1550
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3270 2.3650
Qatari Riyal	0.1897 0.1907
Egyptian Pound	0.1950 0.2100
Omani Riyal	1.7960 1.8120
UAE Dirham	0.1897 0.1907
Greek Drachma	0.2637 0.3125
Cypriot Pound	1.2775 1.3925
Per 100	
Other Currencies	Date: 26/4/1994
Currency	Bid Offer
Canadian dollar	1.6634/44
Danmarks	1.8672/82
1.4138/48	1.4138/48
34.23/27	34.23/27
5.701.060	5.701.651
1593.651.22	161.12.22
7.7225/25	7.7218/30

Mediators push for Bosnia truce amid fears of new front

SARAJEVO (R) — Western and Russian mediators met Bosnian Serbs Friday to urge them to agree a truce with the Muslim-led government as fears grew that fresh fighting could break out in the north between the warring sides.

The "contact group" led by U.S. Ambassador Charles Redman and Russian envoy Aleksei Nikiforov, talked for two hours with the Bosnian Serb leadership at Pale outside Sarajevo. They refused to comment afterwards on the outcome.

The group faces the uphill task of bridging Serb insistence on a permanent ceasefire and Muslim demands for a shorter truce lasting only two or three months.

It met Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic in the Bosnian capital Thursday.

"The first thing on the agenda, as we see it on our side, is to have a cessation of hostilities as soon as possible," Jean Pierre Massat, the Geneva conference on ex-Yugoslavia representative in the group, said in Sarajevo.

Mr. Izetbegovic said his gov-

ernment would back a temporary ceasefire of two to three months to allow time for peace negotiations to settle territorial disputes.

But the Serbs, who control 70 per cent of Bosnia, are arguing for a permanent ceasefire. The Bosnian government says this would allow the Serbs to hold on to captured land while stalling on a final peace of the former Yugoslav republic.

The United States said intelligence reports showed the BSA was moving men and weapons to the area around Brcko, the weakest point in the corridor.

Meanwhile, U.N. Protection Force spokesman Eric Chaperon said more peacekeeping troops were being sent to Gorazde.

A British company of 100 to 150 men was expected to head for Gorazde Friday in Saxon armoured vehicles, together with a headquarters unit and combat engineers who would start clearing mines around the town's water-supply plant.

Mr. Chaperon said a Ukrai-

nian company was also being readied to leave in the next day or so. There are currently about 500 U.N. soldiers in Gorazde.

In Zagreb, Croatia accused rebel Serbs holding a third of its territory of not complying with the terms of a U.N.-brokered ceasefire and called on the international community to exert pressure on them.

Dragoje Sarić, chief Croatian negotiator in talks on the rebel-held Krajina region, said in a letter to U.N. special envoy Yasushi Akashi that Serbs had failed to withdraw heavy weapons from a 20-kilometre zone along part of the 1,600 kilometres (1,000 miles) demarcation line.

Sarić also accused the Serbs of failing to pull back infantry as required and refusing to accept deployment of joint police patrols in buffer zones.

A U.N. spokesman admitted there were problems with the implementation of the month-old ceasefire, but said they did not jeopardise the peace process.

Refugees flood out of Rwanda

MULINDI, Rwanda (R) — A tide of Rwandan refugees poured into neighbouring Tanzania Friday, fleeing massacres and civil war as aid workers raced to save hundreds of thousands of displaced people from starvation in Rwanda's chaos.

Aid agency officials said up to 200,000 Rwandans arrived in northwestern Tanzania Thursday and Friday and a long column of men, women and children were still fleeing southeastern Rwanda.

"This is a major humanitarian disaster. We expect the number to swell to over 500,000," said Sheila Wilson, chief delegate for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Tanzania.

"We cannot cope. We need transport, storage facilities and manpower," said Adam Kimbisia of the Tanzanian Red Cross.

Aid workers said many refugees were crossing Rusingo Bridge into Tanzania as Tanzanian troops had stopped guarding it and Rwanda's side of the frontier was no longer sealed by Rwandan troops.

"The security situation in southern Rwanda is worsening

and the border has opened up so these huge numbers are arriving," said an official of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

He said UNHCR had enough blankets and shelter material in position for the refugees in Tanzania and was sending more staff and arranging land convoys and air lifts.

Before the flood of refugees to Tanzania, a total of 20,000 Rwandans had reached Tanzania, 38,000 fled to Burundi, 5,500 escaped to Uganda and 3,300 had taken refuge in Zaire, the UNHCR said.

In addition, 175,000 Burundian refugees in camps in Rwanda returned home after the start of massacres and renewed civil war following the death of the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi in a rocket attack on their plane near Rwanda's capital on April 6.

U.N. and aid officials say the slaughter in Rwanda now in its fourth week, especially massacres of members of the minority Tutsi tribe by Hutu troops and extremist militiamen, amounts to a campaign of genocide.

Signatories pledged to refrain from calling for early elections and pushing for amendments to Mr. Yeltsin's new post-Soviet constitution. Two demands that led to a violent uprising by the former hardline parliament last October.

Leaders of the Communist Party, the conservative Agrarian Party and the reformist Yabloko Bloc refused to sign the pact.

Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov and Agrarian leader Mikhail Lapshin have joined Accord For Russia and plan to hold a founding conference on May 19 during which delegates were to issue a rival declaration on civic accord.

In the statement, opposition leaders stressed that Mr. Yeltsin's peace pact would lead to "the collapse of the scientific-industrial complex in the country, large-scale plundering of state property and of the treasury, degradation of our people and the destruction of our national religion and culture."

"Today, we must first of all agree on a change in the course of government that would in-

clude, as a priority, measures to save Russia," they added.

The statement was presented to the press by Mr. Zyuganov, Mr. Lapshin, nationalist deputy Sergei Baburin, centrist Stanislav Govorukhin, deputy speaker of the upper house of parliament, Pyotr Romanov and a Yabloko supporter, Vladimir Ratskoi.

Mr. Lipitsky said that although Ratskoi did not attend the news conference, he was aware of the contents of the statement denouncing the Yeltsin pact and "fully supported" it.

Mr. Baburin called for the resignation of Duma speaker Ivan Rybkin, who signed the Yeltsin accord on behalf of the lower house of parliament, but Mr. Zyuganov and Mr. Lapshin disagreed.

Supporters of the pact had said it was important that it be signed ahead of May Day Sunday, after anti-government protests that turned into riots on the holiday last year left a policeman dead and nearly 600 people injured.

Meanwhile, shelling and shooting rocked a suburb of the Burundian capital of Bujumbura overnight and Friday apparently at the start of an army campaign to disarm gunmen by force.

Fighting rock suburb of Burundi capital

This left Mr. Hata heading Japan's first minority government for nearly four decades, and many analysts blame him and his close allies, especially the shadowy Ichiro Ozawa, for causing the split.

They say it was the result of taking a power game too far, and indicated they made light of their responsibilities as government leaders of the world's second biggest economy.

"The Hata government has completely betrayed our hopes," Asahi said.

Nihon Keizai Shimbun, a newspaper for business executives, said the government would not be able to get anything done.

"It is impossible to expect anything from the minority Hata cabinet on big policy issues," it said in an editorial.

Mr. Hata's first task is to pass the 1994-95 budget, now four weeks late, before the current session of parliament ends on June 30. After that it should go to the polls, the paper said.

Mr. Baburin called for the resignation of Duma speaker Ivan Rybkin, who signed the Yeltsin accord on behalf of the lower house and call an election when the budget has passed."

It is a situation where it is necessary to dissolve the lower house and call an election when the budget has passed."

But the 58-year-old Hata said Thursday he would avoid calling an early general election, not due until 1997.

The previous government, under Morihiro Hosokawa, passed a package of reform bills in January, including an overhaul of the electoral system. But an early poll would go under the old rules, benefiting the LDP and Socialists.

Toru Hayano, a member of Asahi's editorial committee, said in a caustic frontpage analysis the government's fragility would make it hard for foreign governments to trust it.

"Apart from the chaotic period after the war, the framework of authority has surely never looked so fragile," he wrote. "Diplomats are worried that from now on, when Japan's government promises something, the other country might not trust it."

Japan's Ministry of Transportation said the maker of the plane's engines, Pratt and Whitney, had been ordered by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration in 1991 to improve the design of the compressor blades.

A ministry official said it was not yet known whether the engines on the plane, bought in January 1991, had actually been updated as required under the order.

Meanwhile, investigators under Morihiro Hosokawa, passed a package of reform bills in January, including an overhaul of the electoral system. But an early poll would go under the old rules, benefiting the LDP and Socialists.

Japanese investigators said they found no sign of an explosion in either engine of the Airbus A300-600R that slammed into the ground and burst into flames after the pilot radioed in that he was going to try landing again.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

'Arafat to enter Jericho in June'

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat should enter the West Bank town of Jericho in the first week of June, a senior Israeli negotiator said Friday. "There is nothing to stop Yasser Arafat going to Jericho as soon as the autonomy agreement is signed on Wednesday," said the official who refused to be named. "But he will no doubt wait until the first week of June when the Israeli army has completed its withdrawal and redeployment," the negotiator told journalists aboard a return flight to Tel Aviv from Cairo where an agreement to launch autonomy was reached on Thursday. The official also confirmed that besides freeing 5,000 Palestinian prisoners after the agreement is signed, Israel and the PLO had decided that Palestinians opposed to the peace process could also be released from jail. But he explained: "We are ready to envisage such releases only if the prisoners make a written commitment (renouncing violence) and if their hands are not stained with (Israeli) blood." Negotiations would continue on the fate of the 9,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, he said.

Observers to deploy in Hebron on May 8

TEL AVIV (AFP) — International observers for Hebron will be officially deployed in the West Bank town from May 8, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said Friday. Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) agreed to the 160-strong "temporary presence" in a bid to help improve security for Palestinians after a Jewish settler massacred more than 30 Muslims in Hebron on Feb. 25. An agreement specifying the mandate of the 90 Norwegians, 35 Danes and 35 Italians will be signed in Copenhagen on Monday, spokesman Raphael Massat said. The observers would arrive next Thursday and begin deploying three days later, the spokesman said, but he was not giving a breakdown of the figures.

Mr. Izetbegovic

Iran says it will stage rally in Mecca

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran on Friday insisted it would stage an "antipathy to pagans" rally in Mecca this year despite what it said was a Saudi Arabian ban. Tehran Radio quoted the official who will lead Iran's pilgrim contingent as saying there was a "divine injunction" to perform the ceremony, which is traditional for Shi'ite Muslims. The official, Hojatoleslam Mohammad Reysahri, said the religious aspects of the pilgrimage should not be divorced from the political ones. Usually, the Iranians have chanted anti-American and anti-Western slogans during the rallies. Hojatoleslam Reysahri said the Saudis had banned the ceremony this year. It was not clear whether he was referring to the traditional ban on political activity, which is reiterated annually, or whether he was referring to a new — so-far unpublicized — Saudi ban.

300 feared dead in Mombasa disaster

MOMBASA, Kenya (AFP) — Some 300 people were believed to have died when a ferry connecting Mombasa island with the southern mainland sank early Friday, the official Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) reported. The Mtongwe ferry was carrying 300 people, most of them commuters heading for work on the island, when it sank into the Indian Ocean. The ferry's maximum capacity is 150 people. There was no word on why the vessel sank. Some 50 bodies had already been recovered and transported to the city's morgue, witnesses said. Mombasa currently has only two ferries connecting the city to the southern mainland — the Mtongwe ferry and the Likoni ferry.

Two British officials held in arms swoop

LONDON (R) — Two British Defence Ministry officials were being held on Friday after large amounts of arms and ammunition were found in raids across the country. "Significant amounts of arms and ammunition have been recovered," a Ministry of Defence spokesman said. "At the moment there is no link with sales to terrorist organisations." The two were arrested on Thursday as a result of an internal investigation by the ministry and inquiries are continuing, the spokesman said. Both worked for the ministry's procurement division in London. Radio reports said the arrests followed two separate investigations, one into irregular arms contracts and another into the theft of weapons due to be disposed of. In a raid on the house of one of the officials in St. Albans, central England, two army trucks were used to take away large quantities of automatic rifles, pistols and ammunition, neighbours told reporters. Other simultaneous raids in Yorkshire, Northeast England, and in Essex, east of London, involved surplus military equipment earmarked for disposal.

Khmer Rouge wants talks outside Cambodia

PHNOM PENH (AP) — Prospects for holding peace talks have dimmed as the Khmer Rouge guerrilla group said it would attend only if the talks were held at a "neutral" site. Premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh had said earlier this week the talks could not be held outside Cambodia because they concerned the country's internal affairs. Officials made available Friday the text of a letter from Khmer Rouge President Khoue Samphan to King Norodom Sihanouk, who proposed holding the talks next week. The letter, dated Wednesday, said that, "in the current situation in which insecurity reigns throughout Cambodia, only a neutral place can provide conditions for the round-table meeting to proceed in an atmosphere of cordiality, national reconciliation and equality for all Cambodian sides."

China slams Clinton-Dalai Lama meeting

BEIJING (R) — China on Friday sharply criticised the U.S. president and vice-president for meeting the Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, accusing them of a "serious interference" in China's internal affairs. "We demand that the U.S. side live up to its commitments on recognising Tibet as part of China's territory, abide by the basic norms governing international relations, set store by the overall interests of Sino-U.S. relations and refrain from taking actions interfering in China's internal affairs and hurting the feelings of the Chinese people," an angry statement from the Foreign Ministry said. President Bill Clinton and Vice-President Al Gore met the Dalai Lama on Thursday and discussed religious and cultural rights in Tibet with the 1989 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, the White House said.

Israel built a giant 'hummos gun'

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel developed a giant peashooter to fire chickpeas up to 40 metres to try to control Palestinians during the early days of the intifada, the army weekly revealed Friday. However, the idea was abandoned by a special military department which studies riot dispersal because it was ineffective, the *Bamahane* magazine said. Soldiers in the department dubbed the machine, the "hummos gun," after the paste made of chickpeas eaten with virtually every meal in Israel. The army also toyed with the idea of firing glue on protesters to pin them down, but tests were a failure, the department chief Colonel Herzl said. The weekly did not give his family name for security reasons.

Li signs friendship treaty with Mongolia

ULAN BATOR (AFP) — China and Mongolia signed a landmark treaty of friendship and cooperation here Friday, replacing an obsolete 1960 accord and formalising the basis for future bilateral ties after a 30-year rift. The treaty was signed by visiting Chinese Premier Li Peng and his Mongolian counterpart Punsalmaaj Jasray. Mr. Li, who described the signing as an "epoch-making event," said the treaty would be formulated into a legally binding document for developing long-term cooperation. The Chinese premier, who arrived here Thursday at the end of a tour of Central Asian states, signed the document following two hours of talks with Mr. Jasray that focused on the development of bilateral relations.

Aziz to visit U.N. in May

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz will come to New York next month for another round of talks on Baghdad's compliance with U.N. resolutions on the scrapping of its weapons of mass destruction and future monitoring of its arms potential.

Ambassador Rolf Ekens, head of the U.N. Special Commission in charge of dismantling Iraqi weapons, told reporters the talks were arranged during a visit to Baghdad from which he just returned.

A U.N. source said Mr. Aziz was expected to arrive in New York May 10 and would remain until about May 19. His visit would coincide with the Security Council's next periodic review on May 17 of Iraq's compliance with the weapons provisions of Gulf war resolutions.

Mr. Ekens on Thursday cited "positive developments in all areas" and a major breakthrough in identifying foreign suppliers for Iraq's chemical weapons programme.

Mr. Ekens briefed the Security Council on his recent visit to Baghdad. He later told reporters, "I am quite optimistic after my talks in Iraq."

The Gulf war ceasefire says Iraq again may sell oil once Baghdad has satisfied the conditions relating to the destruction and monitoring of weapons of mass destruction.

But the United States and Britain also want to attach other conditions, including some relating to human rights and the recognition of Kuwait's sovereignty.

France and other non-aligned council members say Iraq can export oil after satisfying the arms control conditions.

Mr. Ekens said he was especially pleased that Iraq, which previously withheld information about chemical weapons, recently delivered "a wealth of new documents ... it was a breakthrough."

He later told the Associated Press that the information concerned foreign suppliers of Iraq's chemical weapons programme. The information had to be verified, he said.

"I can say we have positive developments in all areas, especially in chemical weapons," he said.

Mr. Ekens circulated in the Security Council a joint Iraqi-U.N. statement saying the two sides "reviewed the considerable progress made... since the last round of high-level talks, held in New York on March 14-19, 1994."

"They noted that many actions had been undertaken in this period, including inspections to establish the baseline for, and phase in, ongoing monitoring and verification."

This referred to data regarding Iraqi facilities capable of being used for both civilian and military purposes.

Such baseline information is needed to enable U.N. inspectors to carry out long-term monitoring to ensure Iraq does not again acquire forbidden nuclear, chemical, biological and longer-range ballistic missile weapons.

"Both sides reiterated their commitment to continue and accelerate intensive efforts aimed at reaching their shared objective," the joint statement said.

Iranian Charge d'Affaires

PARIS (AFP) — This is a summary of the main points of the agreement signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) covering economic relations once Palestinian autonomy begins in the Gaza Strip and Jericho, as provided by the Israeli delegation:

Import policy

Israel and the Palestinian authority will have an import policy basically similar in all respects regarding imports and customs. Nonetheless, the Palestinian authority will be able to import mutually agreed goods at customs rates differing from those prevailing in Israel, following jointly agreed import procedures.

Moreover, it will be able to import goods from Arab countries, in agreed, limited quantities. Arrangements will be made for the two customs authorities to jointly operate the border crossing in Jericho and Gaza.

Monetary policy

The Palestinian authority



AFGHAN PROTEST: A Pakistani policeman on Thursday tries to disperse Afghan women demonstrators in Islamabad protesting against the failure of their leaders to reach any sort of compromise over the ongoing violence in Afghanistan (AFP photo)

Pope is 'excellent' following surgery

ROME (Agencies) — Pope John Paul II underwent successful surgery on a fractured thighbone Friday after slipping and falling as he got out of his bathtub, doctors at the Gemelli clinic where the pontiff was being treated said.

The Pope, 73, underwent three hours of surgery in what doctors described as a "routine" operation which involved placing a metal pin to help heal the fracture. Clinic Director Emilio Tressalti had told journalists outside the hospital earlier that the Pope's general condition was "optimal" and there was no need for concern.

"Of course, any operation requires a minimum of precautions, but this type of intervention is routine for us," he said.

Pope John Paul was taken to the clinic after slipping and fracturing his thighbone as he was getting out of his bathtub Thursday evening.

Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro insisted that the fall was purely accidental and not due to an ailment.

He said the pontiff, who was to have begun a three-day visit to Sicily Friday, had not lost consciousness "either before or after his fall." Sicilian church officials said the visit was postponed Friday until a later unspecified date.

Dr. Emilio Tressalti said earlier surgeons were inserting an artificial replacement for the head and neck of the fractured femur, or thigh bone.

"The Pope's general condition is excellent. It is a complicated operation only because of its nature," Dr. Tressalti said.

The Polish-born pontiff, whose dizzying pace of travel around the world has become a trademark of his papacy, was expected to remain in hospital for three to four weeks for rest and physiotherapy, he added.

The accident, the Pope's second fall in six months, inevitably raised concern for his health, although he managed to crack a joke as he was wheeled into hospital.

"You have to admire my loyalty," he told staff at the Gemelli, where he has been admitted six times.

COLUMN 10

Diana hints at return to public life

LONDON (R) — Princess Diana, estranged wife of the heir to Britain's throne, has hinted that she may be easing her self-imposed withdrawal from public life. She made a surprise appearance at a function for a charity to aid hospitals which look after the terminally ill.

Asked by Britain's Press Association news agency if fans would be seeing more of her in months to come, the Princess of Wales replied, "you may be." Princess Diana announced last December she would be cutting down on her public activities and leading a more private life, devoting extra time to her sons Prince William and Prince Harry.

The princess, widely popular despite her separation from Prince Charles, had been increasingly irritated that her every step was dogged by the media, and on a couple of occasions had shouted at tabloid photographers lying in wait for her. But a Buckingham Palace spokesman sought to play down the importance of the appearance. "It would be wrong to read into her acceptance anything definite or specific about the direction of her work in the future," a palace spokesman said.

Swedish pop star attacked by German fan

STOCKHOLM (R) — Swedish pop star Jenny Berggren, a singer with rock band Ace Of Base, was attacked at her home by a knife-wielding German female fan, the singer said. Berggren, whose group's songs *The Sign* and *Happy Nation* have been number one hits around the world this year, was uninjured in the attack, although her mother received stab wounds to her hand. Berggren told Swedish Television the woman fan had been camping outside her home in Gothenburg, western Sweden for two days. Early Wednesday morning the 21-year-old woman broke into the house where Berggren lives with her parents and forced the singer to her parents' room, where they overcame the German after a struggle.

Norwegian North Pole hero welcomed home

OSLO (R) — Norway's frostiest person to reach the North Pole alone and unaided, returned home Thursday to an enthusiastic crowd. "I never made the North Pole bigger than life itself — I never took any unnecessary risks," Mr. Ousland told reporters, clutching his six-year-old son Max at Oslo's Airport.

"This was an honest trip and maybe one of the last classic challenges left. There are very few white spots on the map when you think in terms of sport achievements," said Mr. Ousland, who was airifted off the North Pole after a 52-day icy slog. Mr. Ousland, who built up fat reserves by drinking a glass of olive oil every day for a year before setting off from Siberia, lost 20 kilos during the trip. His face was frost-bitten. "I have never felt so small in all my life as when I was dropped off by the helicopter and left alone in minus 37 Celsius and a strong wind from the south," Mr. Ousland said about his first day on the icecap.

Former clerk jailed for embezzling millions

PAU, France (R) — A French court has jailed for five years a former bank clerk who embezzled more than 800 million francs (\$135 million) from investors attracted by promises of 30 per cent tax-free returns.

Jackie Milesi, convicted of embezzlement and illicit banking, was also fined 350,000 francs (\$60,000) and condemned to pay 200 million francs (\$34 million) in damages. Two accomplices were given sentences of two and a half and two years, both with half of the term suspended. Mr. Milesi, a 53-year-old charmer who was sentenced Thursday, was estimated to have tricked 2,900 people from pensioners to wealthy investors. The prosecution said that Mr. Milesi, a sacked from a bank for embezzlement 21 years ago, used his clients' funds to pay interest to earlier investors in a classic fraud trick. During the trial he admitted being a crook.

IRA row triggers new Iran-Britain crisis

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued a religious decree ordering Mr. Rushdie's death in February 1989.

Relations were resumed at charge d'affairs level a year later, but were shaken with a round of mutual diplomatic expulsions in July 1992.

And there was a fresh outcry in Britain in February 1993 when spiritual guide Ayatollah Ali Khamenei reconfirmed the Rushdie death sentence.

London and Tehran, however, announced last September during a visit by Foreign Office Assistant Under-Secretary Michael Burton that they would try to put the Rushdie affair to one side.

The latest row threatens to destroy efforts launched last year to quietly normalise relations despite the continued Iranian death threat hanging over British author Salman Rushdie for allegedly blaspheming Islam in "The Satanic Verses."

"It's difficult to guess the outcome of this crisis," said a British source in Tehran who requested anonymity. "But we are sure that our information is correct."

Iran and Britain broke diplomatic relations after the late

Agriculture

Agriculture produce from the autonomy will enter Israel freely, except for five goods on which agreed import quotas have been imposed for five years — tomatoes, cucumbers, potatoes, eggs, and broilers.

Manufacturing

There will be free movement of goods manufactured in the area.

Tourism

A Palestinian tourist administration will be set up to manage subjects related to tourism in the areas of the Palestinian authority. Tourists will move freely between Israel and the autonomy.

Tourist agencies, touring companies and tourist guides will be able to operate "on the other side" provided they satisfy the relevant professional criteria.

Labour

Work in Israel is essential for the Palestinians expanding their employment opportunities. The guiding principle in this sphere is to enable mutual movement of labour.

The rights of Palestinian workers employed in Israel will be preserved according to arrangements existing in Israel, a social security system being established in the meantime by the Palestinians.

taxes levied on gasoline in the autonomy. The agreement stipulates that the prices of gasoline will not fall short by more than 15 per cent of the maximum gasoline price in Israel.

Insurance

The agreement deals with two main topics.

A. The full transfer of the licensing and supervisory authority over the insurance business in the areas of the Palestinian authority.

B. An agreement for the compulsory insurance of motor vehicles and the compensation of the victims of road accidents based on:

The Palestinian authority maintains in its area a system of compulsory insurance of motor vehicles in the form existing in Israel, but with limited compensation.

— Policies issued on the Palestinian authority being valid also in Israel, and victims there being compensated according to the Israeli laws; And Israeli policies being valid in the areas of the Palestinian authority.

The price of gasoline in the autonomy will be determined according to the autonomy's costs in purchasing it, and the